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Why am I (not) struggling? Exploring career prospects of migrant academics at British and Finnish higher education institutions

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Why am I (not) struggling? Career prospects of migrant academics at British and Finnish higher education institutions†

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Abstract

Exclusion takes many forms, which can be based on factors relating to an individual's identity or background. Discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disability are some common forms of exclusion that can significantly impact individuals' lives, both personally and professionally. In this pilot study, we explore the career prospects of migrant academics and learn more about their opportunities and challenges. We focus on experiences of ten migrant academics' working at British and Finnish higher education institutions (HEI) across six categories, i.e., recruitment; promotion; teaching; research; leadership; and networks. While most of the interviewees felt 'disempowered' in relation to recruitment, promotion, leadership, and network building; the results were mixed for teaching and research. We believe our evidence-based interventions can help HEIs, researchers, and policymakers work together to support migrant academics navigate through their careers.

Key words: Career prospects, Finland, higher education institutions, inequality, migrant academics, United Kingdom.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“13 per cent of key workers are born outside their Member State. They clean our houses and hospitals. Work in mining and construction. Operate machinery in factories. They teach our children and work on ICT technology. If all migrants stopped working tomorrow, our economies would close down immediately.”

Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs (2021)¹

In the context of globalisation of the education sector, universities and higher education institutions (HEI) have increasingly become international, which has resulted in global mobility of academic workforce (Pustelnikovaite, 2021; Robson, 2011). Migrant academics, understood as highly skilled first-generation migrant scholars employed by HEIs, are becoming a crucial part of the global education system and represent the section of the host country's workforce (Cañibano & Woolley, 2015). Migrant academics are in high demand as they are believed to be the key contributors to the host country's innovation and knowledge-driven growth that helps sustain the domestic economy (Morley, et al., 2018). In addition to their contributions to economic growth, migrant academics fill the gap in the skilled labour market that arise either from expatriation, ageing population, or low skill set of domestic workers. (Cappelli, 2015; Czaika & Parsons, 2017; European Commission, 2014)

Despite their importance and relevance to the education sector and the overall economy, migrant workers face discrimination at work and in the host country due to their background (Khan, 2022; Krahé, et al., 2005; Morley, et al., 2018; Perreira, et al., 2010; Sabharwal & Varma, 2016). This comes at a time when HEIs are actively looking to internationalise and increase capability in a competitive academic and research landscape (Morley, et al., 2018); and when economies are turning to immigrant workers to fill skills shortages (Marchante, et al., 2006; Matloff, 2013). While attention has been directed towards studying migration in essential sectors such as agriculture (Scott, et al., 2008), nursing (Glaessel-Brown, 1998), and social care (Goel & Penman, 2015; Moriarty, et al., 2008); migration and related issues in higher education continue to be neglected. It is the aim of this chapter to address this research gap.

¹ European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_21_7393

The question that we seek to answer is: what are the opportunities and challenges faced by migrant academics in an era where education is increasingly becoming globalised? In answering this question, we aim to contribute to Goal #10 of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for reduced inequality within and among countries. One of the targets under this goal is:

Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard (United Nations, 2017, p. 14).

An indicator of this target is the proportion of population who have experience discrimination or harassment in the immediate past year based on the grounds of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law². At a time when the European University Association (2018) considers universities as contributors to achieving the SDGs, discrimination of migrant academics remains an acute issue at British (Fernando & Cohen, 2016; Sang, et al., 2013) and Finnish (Habti, 2012; Hoffman, 2007; Khan, 2022) HEIs.

We answer the research question both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, we draw upon the social identity theory, which explains the intricacies between personal and professional experiences (Taylor, 1989). Our theoretical framework explores, analyses, and compares different career phases of migrant academics starting with recruitment; teaching and research obligations; leadership; promotion; and mobility. Empirically, we adopt an investigative case-study analysis using semi-structured interviews, a method widely used to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The participants in our study are first generation migrant academics working at British and Finnish HEIs.

Our choice of British and Finnish HEIs stems from the following considerations. First, there is a stark difference behind the motivation for internationalisation of British and Finnish HEIs. In the U.K., internationalisation of HEIs is driven by market factors (e.g., demand-supply) (Graf, 2009). In Finland, internationalisation of HEIs is led by State funded programmes (Jogunola & Varis, 2018). Second, British and Finnish HEIs have displayed different internationalisation trajectories. The internationalisation of British HEIs has been linked to the historical internationalisation of the British economy and the gradual expansion of the British

² The grounds of discrimination as per Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights include the following: (1) Sex, (2) Race and colour, (3) Language, (4) Religion, (5) Political or other opinion, (6) National or social origin, (7) Association with a minority, (8) Property, (9) Birth, and (10) Other status.

Empire (Knapp, 2015). The internationalisation of Finnish HEIs, on the other hand, is closely linked to the recent internationalisation of the Finnish firms (Dobson & Hölttä, 2001). Third, the spread of English as 'global lingua franca' (Pennycook, 2017) has led to the emergence of Anglophone countries, particularly the U.K. and the U.S., as top destinations for international students and academics (Dodds, 2008; Jenkins, 2014). The uniqueness of Finnish language has been a hindrance in attracting international students and academics to the Finnish HEIs (Dobson & Hölttä, 2001; Juusola & Nokkala, 2022). Fourth, British and Finnish HEIs display a different attitude towards international collaboration. Where Finnish HEIs rank among the top in Europe for their international collaborations (e.g., Erasmus and Erasmus+³ programmes) and double degree programmes (Kompanets & Väättä, 2019), British HEIs are inclined to use individual strategies of internationalisation including franchising or agreements with educational recruitment agencies (Graf, 2009). Finally, the challenges faced by migrant academics at British HEIs are different as compared to their counterparts in Finland. Despite facing discrimination and deteriorating work conditions, migrant academics in the U.K. find it difficult to relocate because they gradually adopt the country's education system and lose academic skills and credentials (Pustelnikovaite, 2021). On the other hand, migrant academics at Finnish HEIs are being pushed out of the country due to the limited opportunities, lower pay than the native Finns, and the incessant urge to recruit a Finnish speaking candidate (Yle, 2019a). This comes at a time when there is a pressing demand for English-language education in a country where English is not an official language (Yle, 2019b; Ylönen & Kivelä, 2011).

Using data from ten open-ended semi-structured interviews, we were able to identify that migrant academics working at British and Finnish HEIs feel disempowered and discriminated when it comes to recruitment, promotion, leadership, and network building. Our findings concerning teaching were mixed where, some migrant academics were in an advantageous position as they had a better understanding of the needs of international students, while others felt bullied at their HEI. In terms of research, migrant academics were encouraged to present their research at conferences but there was a pressing obligation to acquire external fundings without adequate internal support or access to key resources.

We focus on experiences of ten migrant academics' in relation to recruitment, promotion, leadership, and network building; the results were mixed for teaching and research. We believe

³ Erasmus+ programme supports teaching secondments at HEIs abroad (European Commission, 2023).

our evidence-based interventions can help HEIs, researchers, and policymakers work together to support migrant academics navigate through their careers.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Becoming and being a migrant academic

Scholars have examined migrant academics from different perspectives. From a geographical viewpoint, and within the America and British contexts, studies have termed migrant academics as those who moved from the Global South to the Global North (Lawrence, et al., 2014) and British context (Pustelnikovaite, 2021). While others have described them as academics moving from Global North to Global South (Han, 2021; Wang & Chen, 2020). To understand the migrant academics' experiences, extant literature shows becoming a migrant academic is motivated by multi-faceted drivers, and being a migrant academics, on the one hand, faces tremendous challenges (Pustelnikovaite, 2021). On the other hand, migrant academics may experience privileges in their academic careers (Skachkova, 2007).

There has been research on migrant academics in the context of moving from the Global South to Global North, the main possible reasons include are better career prospects; access to resources and networks; political instability and lack of academic freedom; and finally professional development (Skachkova, 2007). In general, HEIs in the Global North, such as European universities, offer higher salaries and better research facilities compared to HEIs in the developing countries (Han, 2021). Secondly, some migrant academics are desired to access research resources and seek global research collaborations. Moreover, in some cases, migrant academics lack of research freedom due to the insecure and instability of political environment. Finally, migrant academics moving from Global South to Global North may get more chances to develop their professional skills by working in the different academic environment (Pustelnikovaite, 2021).

While becoming a migrant academic could gain new resources and more academic opportunities, it is important to note that being a migrant academic and working at HEIs abroad is a new task, many migrant academics face several challenges in their academic careers. For instance, Jiang et al. (2010) suggest that language barriers can impact on non-native speaker staff's communication and teaching effectiveness. In the social factor perspective, cultural differences between the home and the host country can create misunderstanding or conflicts with staff and students (Welikala & Watkins, 2007). Education acculturation, thus, has been often used to examine the migrant academic experiences at HEIs (Shaw & Moore, 2007).

Another growing awareness is that discrimination or bias on migrant academics' immigrant status, race or ethnicity have negative impact on their academic career development (Pustelnikovaite, 2021; Skachkova, 2007). Social isolation and lack of interconnection with communities at different levels (i.e., university, faculty, department and individual levels) caused by these obstacles inevitably lead to the concerns of workplace exclusion and inclusion (Miminoshvili & Černe, 2022).

2.2 Workplace exclusion and inclusion

Individuals in the workplace may experience different feelings of whether they are accepted, valued, included or excluded, marginalized and isolated. Exclusion may take many different forms through individual's identity or background, such as discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and disability. Working place exclusion and inclusion often lead to 'out-group' discrimination from 'in-group' favouritism (Miminoshvili & Černe, 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Some studies find that majority of team members with same or similar status segregates and excludes minority group members who are different from the majority in terms of ethnicity and social status (Shore, et al., 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It is evident that in-group members have superiority and prestige, standing as high-status group over minority group members, thus, leading to racial and ethnic inequality among working employees (Hogg, 1996; Hogg, et al., 2004; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994).

Individuals differ in their status and characteristics in terms of culture, age, ethnicity. Status differences may shape intercultural workgroups (Turner, et al., 1987). Experiences of exclusion in workplace can have a significant impact on individual's job satisfaction, productivity and overall well-being. Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a) studied employees' performance by sampling multinational enterprise based in Finland, their findings show that the Finnish employee group felt empowered than non-Finish employee group in decision-making; participating in work-related activities. On the other hand, the non-finish group experienced disconnection and exclusion (Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b). This unequal power among majority and minority group members explains why majority group possesses superiority and open access to organisational resources over minority group members (Dovidio, et al., 2010; Fernando & Kenny, 2023; Nandi & Platt, 2015). In other words, power relations among racial and ethnical group can cause inequality in institutions with diversified workforce.

Research on ethnic and racial inequality within organisations has investigated different aspects, including migrant employees' struggling in workplace; relationship with high-status group;

exclusion; and knowledge sharing (Cortina, 2008; Harris, 2005). One of the key reasons for this exclusion is discrimination. Literature on discrimination emphasises stereotyping behaviour, prejudices, and fears towards out-group members at work. Brüß (2008) discovered that immigrants have felt discriminated against throughout Europe. Lastly, studies have found that Western Europeans tend to behave in a stereotypical and prejudiced manner towards their peers from different cultures (Bouma, et al., 2003; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Alongside other theories, social identity can be used to explore this phenomenon further.

2.3 Social identity theory

Identity theory is often used to explain how life experiences can be associated with work roles. Taylor (1989) argues that identity is tied up with *who you are; what you are committed to; what you value and what you strive for*. Identity can be constructed and developed through individual thoughts, and reflections. It is always under construction in contexts that are complex and indeterminate, such as social roles, and social types (Anderson & Kinneer, 2005; Kraimer, et al., 2012; Taylor, 2008). Social identity theory posits that individual has multiple social identities, these identities will influence their feelings and behaviours. While identity is co-constructed (Fitzmaurice, 2013), social identity theory recommends? how individuals position and reposition themselves within the community they belong to (Leibowitz, et al., 2013).

Based on the social identity theory, there is growing literature that focuses on professional identity, including the identity and experiences of academics in HEIs (Fitzmaurice, 2013; Leibowitz, et al., 2013). By studying how new academics construct their academic identity, Fitzmaurice (2013) suggests that earlier-career academics' identity is 'critically influenced by the institutions and their international peers in the discipline. However, the value, virtues and beliefs of the individual have emerged as a significant influence on identity construction. Due to different culture background, migrant academics may experience challenges in academia, being inexperienced in the new education system may limit their ability to participate fully in the academic community, like universities. The academic identity depends on how individuals perceive themselves, and how they are perceived and positioned by others (Clegg, 2008; Leibowitz, et al., 2013).

Despite the growing body of research on academics in higher education, few studies have discussed immigrant academics as those who lack social capital and networks in the host country and have limited options to position and re-position their social identity at European

HEIs. Apparently, there are still gaps in the literature and this needs to be studied further. There is also the need for more research to examine intersectionality and its challenges, by applying different theoretical concepts and investigating this phenomenon from multi-faceted perspectives. Our study aims to contribute to the knowledge base on immigrant academics by examining how multiple identities can interact and shape the experiences of immigrant academics within the context of European HEIs.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the pilot study was to explore how migrant academics adapt themselves and develop their careers in the British or Finnish HEIs. The pilot study adopted an exploratory approach with a qualitative method being employed. The qualitative method adopted was a semi-structured interview as this enabled us to explore a phenomenon and gain in-depth information about the participants' experiences and viewpoints (Hennink, et al., 2020). Moreover, the interviews were assisted by an interview guide which provided the researcher with a list of topics to explore (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Besides the interview guide, semi-structured interviews are flexible which allows the interviewers to change the direction of the interview, as well as asking probing and follow up questions to gain more information (Alamri, 2019; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Due to the objectives of the research, quantitative methods were not appropriate as they wouldn't enable us to fully explore the topic (Choy, 2014).

Despite the benefits of using semi-structured interviews, it is important to acknowledge the drawbacks. If there are timing restrictions during the interview, the interviewee may skip important questions or stop asking follow-up questions (Newcomer, et al., 2015). To mitigate this, key questions were highlighted from each section, so the interviewer knew they had to ask them. When the research strategy was being created, four ethical considerations were considered: lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, deception, and harm to participants. Regarding informed consent, all participants received a consent form which had to be signed. Within the form, participants acknowledged that they were able to withdraw from the study at any point. Regarding invasion of privacy, all identifiable information was removed from the transcript so the participants and their institution could not be identified. On top of this, interviewees did not have to answer any questions they didn't want to. Regarding deception, all participants received an information sheet with detailed information about the study, thus removing any aspect of deception. Finally, no physical or emotional harm was caused to any participant.

3.1 Sampling

Non-probability sampling was used instead of probability sampling as the purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of a group of migrant academics, instead of generalising the results (Blackstone, 2012). A purposive sampling technique was used as this was the most efficient method in terms of time and resources.

Before potential participants were contacted, an eligibility criterion was created. First, participants needed to have at least 2-years of consecutive full-time work experience as an academic in at least one HEI in the U.K. or Finland. We excluded individuals who were on their PhD programme at the time of this research because of the different policies governing doctoral education in the U.K. and Finland. Second, participants needed to be working in a country that they were not born in, i.e., the participants would need to be classified as first-generation migrants (Pottie, et al., 2015). The reason for this criterion was to enable us to compare the different cultural viewpoints of the participants. Third, to capture their most recent experiences the participants should not have been on a career-break, sabbatical, or paternal in leave in the year immediately prior to the interview.

Sixteen participants within the authors' professional network were contacted, with ten agreeing to be interviewed, giving us a response rate of 62.5%. Out of the ten interviewees, five were working at British HEIs and five at Finnish HEIs, giving us an even sample across the two countries. The participants were contacted via email and interviews were conducted both in person and online depending on individual preference and logistics. Participants were sent an information and consent form which provided more details regarding the study. For example, the information sheet informed participants that their data would be stored on a secure server, with no identifiable information. The data will be stored for the time required for the study, i.e., approximately 36 months, unless the data is published. If the data is published, it may be stored for longer. We recorded the interviews with the consent of all participants for transcription and analytical purposes. The average interview time was 61.5 minutes, with the shortest being 39 minutes and the longest being 90 minutes. A summary of the interviews is provided in Table 1.

Please take Table 1 about here

4. ANALYSIS

Upon the completion of the ten interviews, thematic analysis was selected as it allowed us to identify patterns and themes within the text (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are many benefits to thematic analysis such as its flexibility, especially when it comes to theoretical frameworks and research approaches, and there was an analysis process that could be followed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Prior to the analysis, we transcribed and carefully examined the interviews to ensure ambiguities within the text were minimised. Furthermore, all identifiable information was removed from the transcript. Once this had been completed, the analysis could begin. During step one, we familiarised ourselves with the data by reading and then re-reading the transcripts. In addition, preliminary notes were taken regarding key points.

Step two consisted of generating codes and entering them into the analysis template that had been created on Word. For example, some of the initial codes included aspects of not fitting in, being undervalued and missing out on promotion opportunities. The third step of the analysis involved searching for and creating the main themes, including international identity, belonging, and privileges and disadvantages as a foreign-born academic. Within each theme, we entered key codes and quotes that supported each heading.

During the fourth and fifth stage, the themes were reviewed and refined, followed by the analysis write-up. Overall, there were four key themes identified. Due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, it is important to assess the validity and reliability of the results to ensure bias is minimised. Key steps were taken to minimise the bias such as having multiple individuals analyse interviews to allow for a comparison of the main themes, and questions were open-ended to avoid response bias.

5. FINDINGS

Derived from the interview data, our analysis reveals three key themes in relation to six categories (i.e., Teaching & learning, research, recruitment, promotion, leadership and network) that illuminate migrant academics' comprehensive working experiences at European HEIs. The following four key themes emerged as *multi-faceted identities*; *empowerment*; *belongingness*; and *institutional attitude*. A summary of findings and emerging themes from our study are presented in Figure 1.

Please take Figure 1 about here

5.1 Multi-faceted identities

Joining a European university in a foreign country means “*a new place, new tasks and new challenges for migrant academics*” (Interviewee 1). According to the accounts of the interviewed migrant academics, all interviewees were aware of their multi-identity status of being a migrant academic, including the professional identity (i.e., a young researcher / an experienced academic) and social identity (i.e., the ethnicity and migrant, gender, age). The following quotations demonstrate their identified roles.

I used to work at the banking industry in my home country, now I am a young academic from Africa Oh, I also worked for a German multinational enterprise based in the U.K. before I joined my first university in the U.K. (Interviewee 1)

I was teaching at an Austrian university before I moved to the current university in the U.K., no matter in which country, I knew that I was judged as an Asian middle-age female academic, and moving from one university to another has not changed my multi-identity. (Interviewee 2)

Whether (you) like it or not, the colour of your skin, hair and accent (English language) remain, and apparently you are ‘different’ from the natives. (Interviewee 3)

I work in Finland under a new name as a person of Country-A⁴ origin and the fact that the two countries have historical problems makes life difficult at work and in social circles. (Interviewee 9)

No matter how much the world talks about racial or religious discrimination, the truth is: it is difficult to progress in Europe as man of Arab origin. (Interviewee 10)

⁴ Country identity protected upon request of the interviewee.

Our findings also show that migrant academics' identities influence their thoughts, feelings and behaviours as they must navigate multi-cultural and social identities. While some participants feel 'fair', others believe that there is an identity crisis (i.e., coloured skin, devalued, unjust treatment) working at European HEIs as migrant academics. One participant claimed that *"despite being given three teaching awards as a junior academic, I have been defamed and devalued"* (Interviewee 7). To echo this, another two participants expressed their concerns in relation to recruitment and promotion.

It's a big capital 'NO' in terms of fairness in promotion for this type of persons (migrant academics), like me.... Same qualification, the native was chosen!" (Interviewee 1)

No matter how much the Finnish HEIs claim they have fair recruitment process and they are welcoming of migrants; what I found is that the recruitment and promotion process is not fair and there is a lot of nepotism and cronyism. Husband, wife, child, in-laws, friends, and list goes on. (Interviewee 6)

Having worked at both British and Finnish schools (HEIs) I can tell you that no matter where I go, I have always been given a cold shoulder when it comes to promotion. Otherwise, why would I have travelled so much? (Interviewee 10)

Interestingly, one participant pointed out that being a migrant academic for a long time at the European HEIs the individual's professional identity could be in 'flux' when the position changed in the institution. The participant has been working at the two different European HEIs for 15 years and claimed:

In my experience, your professional identity at your institution is changeable, as a migrant academic, you position and reposition yourself with time that apparently leads to different individual empowerment. (Interviewee 3)

Another experienced migrant academic at Finnish HEI echoed similar sentiments:

Having worked with Finnish colleagues for over 10 years I have learnt that as a migrant worker I will have to longer hours to be able to have some kind of a standing within the department. I tried to voice my opinion at the very beginning when I thought I was treated unfairly. It got worse afterwards as I was loaded with unproductive administrative work. I was even made to work in a tiny basement room with old files. I was coding company

reports, which honestly carried no real value. Now I don't say a word and I haven't worked in a basement for the past several years. (Interviewee 10)

5.2 Empowerment: Privileges vs disadvantages

Having mentioned earlier, to understand the comprehensive living experiences of migrant academics in British and Finnish HEIs, we asked the participants to explore their experiences in the six categories: recruitment; promotion; teaching; research; leadership; and networks. All of them claimed that 'disempowered' in relation to recruitment, promotion, leadership (due to the low-ranking leadership roles) and network building. Nevertheless, regarding teaching and research the findings were mixed: partially empowered (privileges) and disempowered (disadvantages).

Despite these constraints and disadvantages of being a migrant academic, it is evident from our interview data that all participants had a certain level of individual empowerment. Amongst these interviewees, all participants taught more international students than home students at their HEIs, overall, they are satisfied with their teaching and supervision activities, and felt that international students show more respect comparing home students in general. As privileges, their multi-cultural background and international experiences (knowing the world in the different ways) enable them to gain some control over their teaching activities and build research collaborations (using their world linkage), providing them the sense of 'empowerment' and promoting their social justice. Confirming these findings, a young African male participant shared how he gained the teaching credibility in his classes:

I mainly teach undergraduate students on the subject of International Business, among them half are international students and half home students, roughly? Some home students haven't been overseas and had a narrow mind. They only know 'the way they are familiar'. I used my African cultural background as a privilege to broaden their mindset. Some home students are quite eager (to learn) if you are using the cases which they are not familiar with. For example, instead of using the case study of Vodaphone U.K., I used an African case in my module, and thus, the home students learned about the culture of the country, the business environment etc., so they were excited! That's the moment you feel 'empowered and equitable'. (Interviewee 1)

Concerning research opportunities, two interviewees working at Finnish HEIs shared similar experiences, where both were actively engaging in funding applications, partly because it was their only source of subsistence.

Subsistence is difficult when you don't have a steady source of income. 3 months, 4 months, 6 months contracts. That's a joke. How is one supposed to survive in this country? (Interviewee 6)

I spent over 80% of the time during my PhD studies on funding applications. I thought things would change once I graduate. They have partly. I am on a fixed-term contract, but I still actively engage myself in funding applications. Can you imagine I have cumulatively received over 180,000 euros in research funding over the past 5 years? There is not much to complain on this front because my CV shows those 180,000 euros as grant money. (Interviewee 8)

However, according to one of our interviewees, language barriers and lack of support make them feel 'disempowered'.

You are not a native speaker of English and that's an obstacle. Even your English is fine, you are not struggling to communicate with colleagues and students, but you have an accent. The accent seems an important indicator when students judge your teaching quality, why? I am teaching business subjects, not English pronunciation! Your teaching skills are judged by your accent....Stressful and feel powerless! (Interviewee 2)

Another reason caused 'disempowerment' is lack of institutional support. It was evident that migrant academics moving from their home country to the foreign country face tremendous challenges, both socially (Western culture) and academically (new teaching system). According to the participants, lack of support from their institutions, such as less access to resources and heavy allocated teaching activities discourage them to become active participants to engage other academic activities such as research. Some interviewees reflected on this by stating:

I had already published a few 3 and one 4* journal articles before I joined UK-C. Can you imagine, after 6 years, I am still a Senior Lecturer today? I used to teach 14, even 16 hours and prepare 6 different teaching activities per week, (was) allocated 4 modules in one semester, how could I possibly find time to do my research? No, you cannot control your work and your life. (Interviewee 2)*

I do feel pressurised only because I am given more teaching which eats into my research time, and this is different to domestic colleagues, like I told you I am the only one teaching more than 250+ students by myself at the business school. (Interviewee 7)

5.3 Belongingness: Discrimination and exclusion

According to our interview data, the different levels of bias and discrimination exist at European HEIs. All participants claimed that these bias and discrimination had certain impact on individual's sense of belonging to their HEIs. Based on their experiences, this contributed to a culture of exclusion and marginalisation in the university context. Our findings reveal that the two categories that marginalise migrant academics from others are 'promotion' and 'opportunities'. For example, with respect to underrepresented groups, like migrant academics, the decision maker at the higher level in charge of promotion may unconsciously favour candidates who share similar culture background; or with certain racial stereotypes, thus, leading to migrant academics' leaving their respective HEIs. The following narratives echoed to this finding:

Four migrant academics from my department left the university within a span of one semester because they all failed their applications for promotions, no discrimination? I am not persuaded. (Interviewee 1)

British universities are quite good at preparing documents (laughs), everybody knows that racism is wrong, and regulations and policies are always there, but in my experience, policies and actions do not go hand in hand. Saying is one thing, doing is another. (Interviewee 3)

I see a lot of migrant workers leaving. In the last two months, there have already been two people within business management, and I don't have the statistics across the business school, but two people are leaving and they are from under-represented groups. (Interviewee 7)

Some of our participants were quite vocal about the widespread discrimination and recruitment mismanagement at their respective HEIs.

Look at our professors (at FIN-B). They are all white. They're predominantly from Finland, some 50 plus and male. When it comes to promotion and recruitment, the native

employees are given preference despite there being stronger candidates of a different background. (Interviewee 4)

Several opportunities were denied for me because I wasn't Finnish. I had just graduated along with a colleague who was a native Finn. They announced a position for Assistant Professorship, collected the applications, but never announced any decision. Not even rejection. They did not even announce who had been selected. A few months later I noticed that my colleague's name plate on her door had changed from 'Postdoctoral Researcher' to 'Assistant Professor'. Does that mean she was offered the position? I'll never know. (Interviewee 6)

Echoing his experiences, another participant pointed out:

I think there are lots of opportunities that I have missed out due to my background...like promotion, I feel like there is nobody who is there who would encourage me to apply and guide me through the process, and all these opportunities I feel I missed out on because of my background" (Interviewee 7).

Some of our interviewees experienced the feeling of not being accepted and valued in their host societies. They did not have a strong sense of belongingness and their migrant identity was used against them to be connected to the community. This is evident in the words of two interviewees working at Finnish HEIs:

I used to work in Country-A as an Associate Lecturer at a very reputed university. I was in my third year of PhD there when I got the opportunity to visit FIN-B on a short research visit. The director liked my work and offered me a paid PhD studentship. To be honest, the offer was enormous. They baited me and I fell for it (laughs). I completed my PhD in two years because of my previous experience. That's when the challenges started. FIN-B did not offer me a position and I entered the job market. I might have sent two dozen applications for different positions at Finnish HEIs⁵, but I did not receive a single interview call. Unfortunately, the relations between Country-A and Finland have not been very good, which of course impacts the perception of the locals. Following advice from a

⁵ Upon questioning further, Interviewee 9 revealed that he couldn't consider non-Finnish HEIs for family reasons, nor could he return to his home country for political reasons.

close friend, I legally changed my name to sound more Finnish. Here I am, an Associate Professor at one of the HEIs that rejected me earlier. I can't complain. (Interviewee 9)

The reality is that I am brown-skinned, and my name reveals my religion. I have been in this industry for over 15 years (18 years), and I spent 10 years as an Assistant Professor here in Finland. People (natives) who recently had their PhDs were getting promoted to Associate Professorships, Professorships, but I was never promoted. Seeing some fellow countrymen, three years ago I adopted a Finnish surname and last year I was offered an Associate Professorship at FIN-F. Everything is in the name! (Interviewee 10)

Our findings suggest that the discrimination faced by migrant academics also takes shape of ridiculing or threatening colleagues. For instance, one of the interviewees highlighted being treated disrespectfully by senior colleagues due to her background.

(Some) senior level staff have even spoken down to me and told me 'In the U.K., this is how we do things', it's like I'm mentally challenged because of my background. (Interviewee 5)

Another interviewee discussed how he was threatened for failing native students.

It happened once that I failed a student's thesis because it was of a very poor quality. Next day the programme manager walked into my office without knocking the door and started questioning me as to why I had failed the student. My answer was simple, 'She has not put in any effort. There is no evidence of critical thinking. The framework is weak, research questions are not aligned with the objectives...' I explained all the reasons for not awarding a grade, but the research manager was pushing me to pass. She said, 'Well (name), you see you will be out of contract by September, and you do need a new one for your visa. So, you will need to show that you have graded (passed) a few theses.' That was it. I never failed a student (again). (Interviewee 8)

Evidently, our findings show that identity and belongingness are interconnected to each other and have considerable impact on migrant academics' working experience (both positive and negative) in the context of British and Finnish HEIs.

5.4 Context matters: The institutional attitude

The final key theme emerged in your research is how individual HEIs' attitude towards to migrant academics would affect their experiences working at the HEIs. Beyond the individual

level, the participants felt that the practices of equality, diversity and inclusive (EDI) of the university do have impact on migrant academics' working experiences. HEIs lack of inclusive policies and practices that support EDI can contribute to 'negative feelings' and 'discourage' migrant academics making connections with those HEIs. The following narratives from our participants confirm this finding:

When I looked at the profiles of the faculty members (UK-A), I found a lot of diversity than FIN-C, that's why I moved to UK-A. (Interviewee 6)

Compared to the UK-F, I think they weren't fair. I remember the UK-E's job was in the same area I was doing work, so I was really excited, and my supervisors told me that this job was literally created for you, but I think there could have been some unconscious bias there. (Interviewee 7)

The participants had a strong feeling that some HEIs promote EDI better than others, and HEIs advocating diversity make them feel more valued and accepted. However, some HEIs claimed that they are 'EDI driven', but do not implement EDI policies and conduct EDI activities at the operational levels. For instance, Interviewee 7 addressed her concerns: *"I would say that co-chairing the EDI committee at the business school or at the university (UK-E) is more tokenism. Are issues really considered? No. Are people heard regarding their EDI issues. No."*

5.5 A comparative assessment of British and Finnish HEIs

As highlighted in the introduction section, British and Finnish HEIs are intrinsically different in terms of their approach towards internationalisation and treatment of migrant academics. In this section we draw upon the experiences of migrant academics to formulate a comparative assessment. We observed both similarities and differences across the six categories of migrant academics' experiences working at British and Finnish HEIs. In terms of promotion, leadership and networks, the participants echoed similar experiences where they had few promotions and obtain leadership progression, and the scope for networking with native colleagues was limited and they resorted to networking through their personal networks in their home countries or professionally outside the country of HEI.

British and Finnish HEIs approach towards recruiting migrant academics displays a divergent pattern. British HEIs tend to have a standardised approach towards recruitment but based on our findings, they may or may not be open towards recruiting migrant academics. Out of the ten participants in our study, three relocated to the U.K. from Europe (1 from Austria and 2 from Finland) because of the availability of job opportunities. Finnish HEIs display a less

transparent recruitment process where candidates tend to be selected based on family ties or personal networks with the recruiters. Moreover, job applicants at Finnish HEIs are not always informed of the recruitment decision (esp. negative decisions).

In terms of research and teaching, British and Finnish HEIs are mirror opposites. On the one hand, migrant academics at British HEIs are overloaded with teaching, which has a cascading effect on their research output. On the other hand, migrant academics at Finnish HEIs are deprived of teaching opportunities and are pushed towards external funding for subsistence as formal HEI contracts are dubious. Our findings also reveal that Finnish HEIs offer less protection to migrant academics in terms of workplace bullying. We provide a comparative summary of British and Finnish HEIs in Table 2 below.

Please take Table 2 about here

6. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Various phases in the internationalisation of higher education have emerged since medieval times (De Wit & Merksz, 2012). HEIs that originated in the 18th and 19th centuries had a national focus, mobility of students and scholars was not encouraged, and Latin as the universal language of instruction was displaced by vernacular languages (Hammerstein, 1996). In the early part of the 20th century, political events led to the development of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the United States in 1919; the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in Germany in 1925; and the British Council in the U.K. in 1934 (Thondhlana, et al., 2020). The ERASMUS European programme to support student and staff mobility within Europe was developed in the second half of the 1980s, to nurture a sense of European citizenship and view international education as a cooperative initiative. The United Kingdom on the other hand, adopted a competitive direction in 1981 under the Thatcher Government, where full-cost fee coverage was introduced for post-secondary education as a means of recruiting income-generating international students (De Wit, 2017). Similar models soon followed in other English-speaking nations, and a competitive direction set the agenda for HEIs in the latter half of the 1990s.

Globalisation has resulted in higher education institutions requiring to implement internationalisation agendas in recruiting across national boundaries (Hsieh, 2012), and this in

turn has fuelled an increasing demand for specialised labour (King, 2002). Studies have also discussed that many host societies across Europe, seldom approve the presence of foreigners in their midst (Brüß, 2008). However, with HEIs becoming more diverse and globalised, and internationalisation becoming a subject of immense interest, accepting scholars from different cultural backgrounds seems to contribute positively to university rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015).

While few studies have discussed the career prospects associated with migrating to a foreign country (Sang, et al., 2013), the dominant consensus in literature discusses the disadvantages and obstacles faced by migrant academics in their careers (Salaff, et al., 2002; Turchick Hakak & Al Ariss, 2013). Our pilot study supports this notion empirically, by providing insights into the experiences of first-generation migrant academics working at British and Finnish higher education institutions. The results from our study show that migrant academics face significant challenges and barriers that disempower and demotivate them from reaching their full academic potential. While the reality points to an invidious situation, where migrant academics are expected to fill a cross-border void in European HEIs, the limited access to resources and opportunities that favour non-migrants provide gloomy career prospects for highly skilled migrant academics who cross national boundaries (Fernando & Cohen, 2016). Some of these misplaced opportunities relate to research grants, promotions, teaching, leadership, and mobility. This calls into question the internationalisation agendas attached to academia, which requires further assessment. Furthermore, the suboptimal standards within higher education institutions in adopting inclusive policies and practices, have made it extremely difficult for migrant/immigrant academics to balance their personal and professional commitments, overall leading to job dissatisfaction, and their inability to integrate into the academic community. While this has also been empirically supported in our study, some suggestions on inclusive practices can include language assistance, teaching and research support, cultural integration programmes and other similar resources that can help migrant academics navigate through their respective academic environments.

Experiencing prejudices based on one's ethnicity, nationality, immigration status and/or accent can be detrimental to an individual's well-being (both physical and mental) and career prospects. It is thus important for HEIs to recognise and address these challenges, instead of providing blanket forms of support that do not challenge the disadvantages associated with migrant academics' career prospects. On the other hand, the steadfast resilience migrant academics reveal in facing these challenges, equips them with a higher degree of excellence in their fields (Shah, et al., 2010).

7. CONCLUSION

In our pilot study, we highlight some of the limitations around the specific and effective interventions that HEIs could embrace in understanding the challenges faced by migrant academics. We suggest that future studies on migrant academics take an intersectional approach to better understand how factors such as race, gender, immigration status, and ethnicity, can shape academics' experiences. A comparative analysis could also be adopted to identify similarities and differences faced by migrant academics across different countries and regions. Gaining better insight into the challenges faced by migrant academics can help HEIs, researchers, and policymakers, to work together, and incorporate evidence-based interventions in the policies and practices, thereby creating an inclusive academic environment, where all its members can fully participate and engage successfully in all aspects of academic life, i.e., teaching, research, and service.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Summary of the interviews

Interviewee ^{a.}	Origin	Qualification	HEI ^{a.}	Experience ^{b.}	Duration (mins.)	Mode
1	West Africa	PhD (UK-A)	UK-A†, UK-B	5	50	In person
2	East Asia	PhD (Austria)	Austria, UK-A†	6	67	In person
3	East Asia	PhD (UK-C)	UK-C	15	90	Online
4	East Europe	DSc (FIN-A)	FIN-A, FIN-B, FIN-C†	9	62	Online
5	East Asia	PhD (UK-D)	UK-E	3	39	In person
6	South Asia	DSc (FIN-B)	FIN-B, UK-A†	5	60	Online
7	South Asia	PhD (UK-F)	UK-F, UK-E†	9	63	In person
8	South Asia	DSc (FIN-B)	FIN-B	10	49	Online
9	East Europe	DSc (FIN-B)	FIN-B, FIN-D†	12	87	Online
10	Middle East	DSc (FIN-E)	FIN-E, UK-G, FIN-F, FIN-G†	18	48	Online

^{a.} Identity of interviewees and HEIs protected for ethical reasons.
^{b.} Number of years working at British or Finnish HEIs at the time of the interview.
[†] Interviewee's affiliation at the time of interview

Table 2. Comparative summary of migrant academics' experience at British and Finnish HEIs

	British HEIs	Finnish HEIs
Recruitment	a. Recruitment criteria is standardised. b. May or may not be open towards recruiting migrant academics.	a. Recruitment process is not transparent: criteria are not clear, and candidates are not informed of the decision. b. Closed towards migrant academics: applicants within personal networks are preferred.
Promotion	Native academics preferred over migrant academics.	Native academics or applicants within personal networks are promoted over migrant academics.
Teaching	Migrant academics are overloaded with teaching.	a. Workplace bullying: migrant academics are pressurised to pass the students. b. Migrant academics are deprived of teaching opportunities.
Research	Less scope for research as workload is heavily inclined towards teaching.	Migrant academics are pushed towards external research funding for subsistence as formal HEI contracts are inadequate or not offered.
Leadership	Lack of opportunities to climb the leadership ladder.	Lack of opportunities to climb the leadership ladder.
Networks	Narrow scope of networks: mainly personal or professional networks outside the country of HEI.	Narrow scope of networks: mainly personal or professional networks outside the country of HEI.

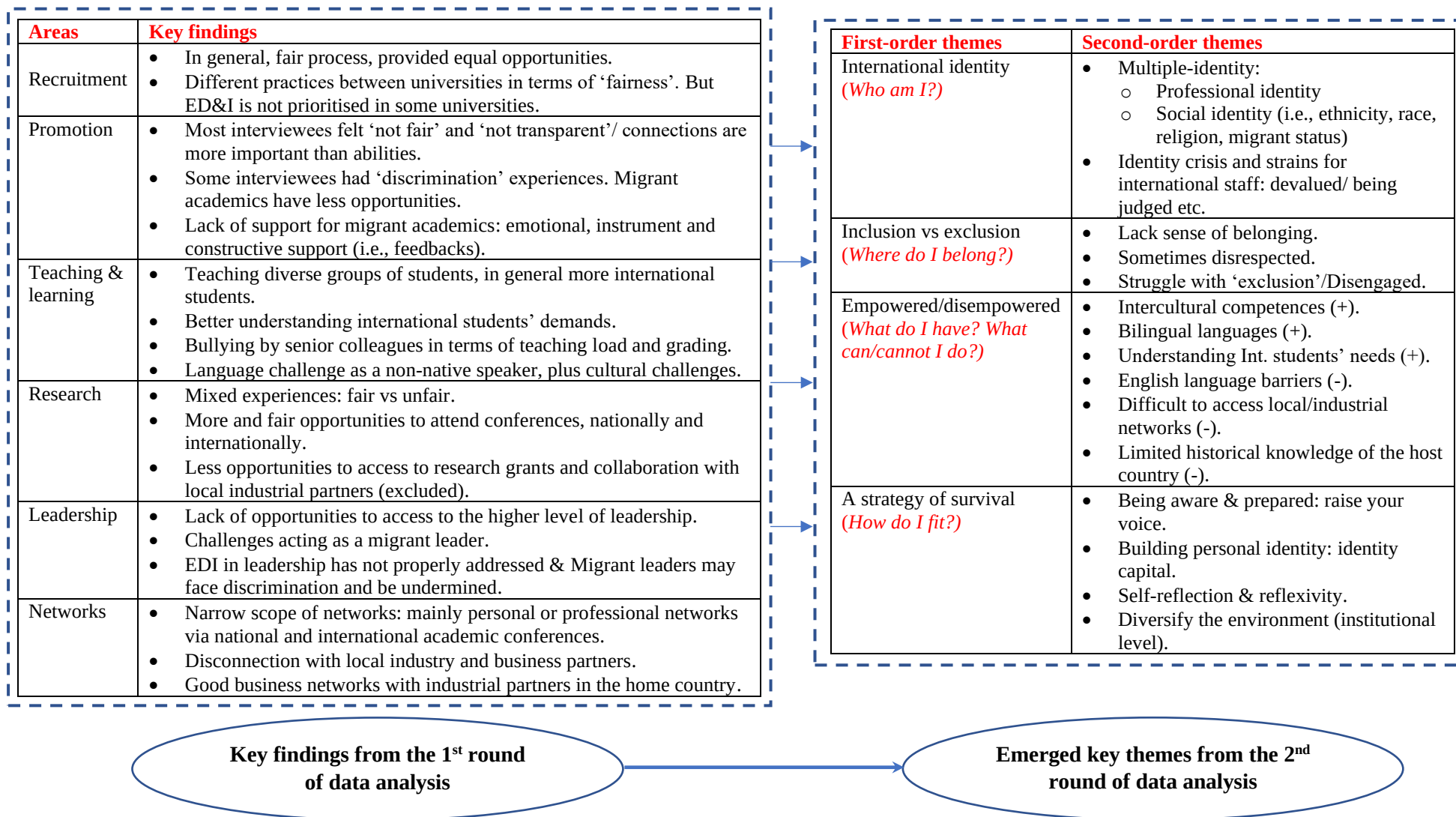


Figure 1. Summary of findings and emerging themes